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FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING FORCES IN THE MIDDLE EAST

United Nations Disengagement Observer Force

United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the reports of the Secretary-General on the Financing of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) (A/50/386) and the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) (A/50/543). During its consideration of the reports, the Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information.

2. The budgets for the maintenance of UNDOF and UNIFIL are submitted for the seven-month period from 1 December 1995 to 30 June 1996 and for the five-month period from 1 February to 30 June 1996, respectively. The budget periods covered in the reports of the Secretary-General are such as to conform to the new budget cycle from 1 July to 30 June, as decided by the General Assembly in its resolution 49/233 A of 23 December 1994.

I. UNITED NATIONS DISENGAGEMENT OBSERVER FORCE

3. UNDOF was established pursuant to Security Council resolution 350 (1974) of 31 May 1974 to supervise the cease-fire called for by the Security Council and the agreement on disengagement between Israeli and Syrian forces. The Mission's mandate has subsequently been extended by the Security Council, most recently by its resolution 996 (1995) of 30 May 1995 until 30 November 1995, as recommended by the Secretary-General in his report on UNDOF of 17 May 1995 (S/1995/398).

4. The Committee notes from paragraph 5 of document A/50/386 that, as at 31 July 1995, total appropriations and commitments authorized for UNDOF and the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) amounted to $1,116.6 million for the period from the Mission's inception to 30 November 1995. For the same period, total contributions received amounted to $1,015.5 million compared to a total assessment of $1,083.5 million, resulting in a balance of assessments due of $68 million.

5. As indicated in paragraph 8 of the same document, the cost estimates for the period from 1 December 1995 to 30 June 1996 amount to $18,753,000 gross ($18,221,000 net) or to a monthly rate of expenditure of $2,679,000 gross ($2,603,000 net) for the seven-month period. This compares to estimates for the period from 1 June to 30 November 1995 in the amount of $16,055,498 gross ($15,564,000 net) or $2,677,583 gross ($2,594,000 net) per month authorized by the General Assembly in its resolution 49/225 of 23 December 1994.

6. The budget estimates for the period from 1 December 1995 to 30 June 1996 provide for a troop strength of 1,036 throughout the seven-month period, comprising 821 infantry and 215 logistics personnel, and a civilian personnel establishment of 120 posts, comprising 36 international (5 Professional and above, 5 General Service and 26 Field Service) and 84 locally recruited staff.

7. UNDOF troops are currently deployed within and close to the area of separation, with two battalions provided by the Governments of Austria and Poland and a logistic contingent by the Government of Canada (see S/1995/398, paras. 4-6, and A/50/386, annex V). The Committee notes from paragraph 10 of document A/50/386 that full reimbursement has been made for troop costs up to 31 May 1995. Upon request, the Committee was informed that about $3.4 million is owned to troop-contributing countries for June, July and August 1995.

8. The Committee notes that the budget estimates include provisions for alterations, adaptations and construction of premises in the camps where UNDOF is located, amounting to $230,000. The Committee understands that these projects will be executed largely by contingent personnel without incurring additional costs; the Committee welcomes this development.

9. With reference to the actions to be taken by the General Assembly at its fiftieth session as proposed in paragraph 11 of document A/50/386, the Committee recommends that the General Assembly appropriate the amount of $16,065,498 gross ($15,564,000 net) for the period from 1 June to 30 November 1995. These amounts were authorized by the General Assembly in its resolution 49/225 as commitments for the maintenance of UNDOF and for assessment for the same period. Additionally, the Committee recommends that the Assembly authorize the Secretary-General to enter into commitments in the amount of $2,679,000 gross ($2,603,000 net) per month for the period from 30 November 1995 to 30 June 1996 and the assessment of such amounts, should the Security Council decide to continue the Force beyond 30 November 1995.

II. UNITED NATIONS INTERIM FORCE IN LEBANON

10. UNIFIL was established by the Security Council in its resolution 425 (1978) of 19 March 1978 for operations in southern Lebanon. The Mission's mandate has subsequently been extended by the Council, most recently by its resolution 1006 (1995) of 28 July 1995 until 31 January 1996, as recommended by the Secretary-General in its report on UNIFIL of 19 July 1995 (S/1995/595).

11. As indicated in paragraph 9 of document A/50/543, as of 30 September 1995, total appropriations and commitments authorized by the General Assembly for UNIFIL amounted to $2,575.6 million for the period from the Mission's inception to 31 January 1996. For the period, total contributions received amounted to $2,312.8 million against total assessments of $2,575.6 million, resulting in an outstanding balance of assessments of $232 million.

12. As stated in paragraphs 13 to 15 of the Secretary-General's report, the cost estimates for the period from 1 February to 30 June 1996 amount to $53,874,000 gross ($52,448,000 net) or to a monthly rate of $10,774,800 gross ($10,489,600 net) for the five-month period.

13. The Committee notes from paragraph 15 of the document that the monthly estimates for the five-month period beginning 1 February 1996 reflect the streamlining of the Force, as proposed by the Secretary-General in its report of 19 July 1995 (S/1995/595, para. 11). The proposed monthly rate of $10,774,800 gross ($10,489,600 net) reflects a decrease of 4.1 per cent compared to the monthly commitments of $11,234,500 gross ($10,870,830 net) authorized in General Assembly resolution 49/226 for the six-month period from 1 August 1995 to 31 January 1996.

14. The budget estimates for the period from 1 February to 30 June 1996 provide for a phased reduction of 10 per cent in the overall strength of the Force. The Committee notes from paragraph 8 and annex III that the troop strength is expected to be reduced from the current authorized strength of 5,015 to 4,513 troops by 30 April 1996.

15. The Committee notes from paragraphs 17 and 18 that, as result of delays in the payment of assessed contributions, UNIFIL has been unable to meet its obligations on a current basis, particularly those due to the troop-contributing countries. Although full reimbursement has been made to troop-contributing Governments up to the period ending 31 January 1995, for the period from 1 February to 31 March 1995, monthly reimbursement to Governments has been made only at the partial rate of $750 per person per month, as part of the approved rate of $988 per person per month. Upon inquiry, the Committee was informed that these arrangements are on a provisional basis, with the concurrence of the troop-contributing Governments concerned. As of 31 August, a total amount of $30.7 million is due to troop-contributing countries.

16. Similarly, the budget estimates provide for a reduction in the civilian personnel establishment from 524 to 487 posts. As shown in annex IV, international and local posts would be reduced by 10 per cent from 373 to 336 posts (18 Professionals, 45 General Service, 80 Field Service and 193 local posts) and general temporary assistance would include 151 positions. The

Committee welcomes the Secretary-General's proposal to reduce UNIFIL's international and local posts by 37 posts (1 P-5, 1 P-2, 5 General Service, 9 Field Service and 21 local posts). The Committee notes, however, that no reductions are proposed in the positions financed from funds appropriated for general temporary assistance.

17. The Committee notes from paragraph 15 in the main text of the report and paragraph 9 (g) of annex II thereto that the reduction in local staff is accompanied by an increase in the provisions for upgrading and re-equipping the facilities in two main kitchens at Naqoura Camp, as a result of closing three of the five kitchens there in order to achieve manpower savings. Upon request, the Committee was informed that 24 local posts will be eliminated as a result of the closure of these kitchens.

18. With regard to the provisions for general temporary assistance ($900,000), the Committee is concerned with the continued practice of using funds appropriated for general temporary assistance to finance positions in UNIFIL (see annex VI to the Secretary-General's report). The Committee has indicated that general temporary assistance funds are often used for the purpose of financing positions that are actually temporary posts (A/50/7/Add.2, para. 18). The Committee recalls that, upon inquiry, in a related matter, the Committee had been informed that provisions for general temporary assistance were included in the United Nations regular budget for the purpose of covering the costs relating to peak workloads and to the temporary replacement of staff on maternity and sick leave under the provisions of the Staff Rules. The Committee had also been informed that the provisions for general temporary assistance had not been included in the budgets of peace-keeping operations, with the exception of UNDOF and UNIFIL missions and the peace-keeping support account. The Committee further recalls that, based on its recommendation, the General Assembly, in its resolution 49/250 of 20 July 1995, authorized the conversion of 61 temporary positions, funded from provisions for general temporary assistance under the support account, to temporary posts.

19. In this regard, the Committee reiterates its request to the Secretary-General to reconsider the practice of using provisions for general temporary assistance to finance positions in peace-keeping budgets that are actually temporary posts, like those in the budget of UNIFIL. The Committee reiterates its request to the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly during the fiftieth session, through the Advisory Committee, on the measures he has taken to address the concerns of the Committee with regard to the use of funds for general temporary assistance.

20. With respect to the Secretary-General's proposal for the actions to be taken by the General Assembly, the Advisory Committee concurs with the proposal, as stated in paragraph 20 of document A/50/543. It therefore recommends that the General Assembly appropriate the amount of $67,407,000 gross ($65,224,980 net), for the period from 1 August 1995 to 31 January 1996, which was authorized as commitments and for assessment on Member States under the terms of Assembly resolution 49/226. In addition, with regard to the period from 31 January 1996 to 30 June 1996, the Committee recommends that the Assembly authorize the Secretary-General to enter into commitments not to exceed the amount of $10,774,800 gross ($10,489,600 net) per month for the maintenance of UNIFIL and

the assessment of such amounts, should the Security Council decide to renew the mandate of the mission beyond 31 January 1996.